

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5552

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As of February 25, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to children on motorcycles.

**Brief Description:** Modifying restrictions on children riding motorcycles.

**Sponsors:** Senators Franklin, Murray, Keiser, Marr, Kline and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/23/09.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Wendy Malkin (786-7434)

**Background:** Under current law, it is unlawful for any person to transport a child under the age of five on a motorcycle or motor-driven cycle. A violation of this law is a traffic infraction.

**Summary of Bill:** Children at least five years old, but less than 12, may only ride on a motorcycle or motor-driven cycle if their feet rest firmly on the foot rests and they are either (1) sufficiently supported by a back rest; or (2) are using a handgrip mechanism.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: We can't legislate common sense, but sometimes when injuries or deaths occur, we pass laws to prevent them from happening again. We pass policies to protect children in all sorts of ways, including laws on car seats and seat belts. The safety of children is very important.

CON: It is difficult to re-engineer motorcycles for components if the motorcycles were not designed with the components. There is no evidence that it has been a problem for children

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to ride without handgrips or backrests. This seems to be a solution looking for a problem. For some families, children riding motorcycles with parents is an important aspect of family bonding. Riders are generally responsible enough to not let children ride who are too small to properly balance on the seat. Riding with children is also an opportunity to teach them about safety on the road and the importance of proper safety gear.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Franklin, prime sponsor.

CON: John Bolin, Larry Walker, Washington Road Riders Association; William and Jennifer Zimmerman, Elaine Parsons, citizens; Donnie and Chrystyanna Landsman, Michael Allen, American Bikers Aimed Towards Education.